

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Congress excels at doing nothing; but sometimes doing nothing or empty political posturing, as we've just seen from the Republican majority, ignores our Nation's critical needs.

By leaving town without extending unemployment insurance, the 2.3 million long-term unemployed Americans who want to work and can't find work in this economy is especially cruel on the eve of the Christmas season. And for 48 million seniors and disabled, the new year will dawn with a 28-percent decrease in physicians' reimbursement. Many will find that they can't get in to see a doctor. It will be slammed in their face.

So with these actions, or rather these inactions by the Republican majority, they truly embody the spirit of the season: the Grinch.

CONGRATULATING CHRIS CARNEY

(Mr. McHENRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. McHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my good friend, Chris Carney, on taking the oath of office to the State Senate in North Carolina.

Chris has served as a town commissioner for the last number of years. I was able to work with him on that board. He developed a reputation as a thoughtful leader, someone who listened to his constituents and actually tried to craft solutions. He'll take that same mentality to the State Senate in North Carolina. So today I rise to congratulate Chris Carney. His community is proud of him, and I'm proud to call him a friend.

I know his wife and his three children are very excited about the role he is about to undertake. Congratulations, Chris.

UNEMPLOYED IN AMERICA

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I want the 2.3 million unemployed Americans to know that not all Members of this House are heartless. In fact, 193 Members of this House stand with the unemployed of this country, the 2.3 million mothers and fathers who have children and families to feed as we move through this very, very poignant holiday season.

I hope when we come back in January we can do what's right for America. But we fell 36 votes short.

That's because the Republicans, and I hardly see any of them on the floor at this point, care more about taking care of those who earn over a million dollars than they do about the people who are falling off the edge.

I feel sorry for our country today. But you know what? The American

people have a way of righting the tables when they get sadly out of balance, and that moment is coming.

I feel sorry for the people who are unemployed. Be strong during this season, know that when we return in January, we have a chance to correct what sadly was voted down today.

COME TOGETHER

(Mr. WOODALL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to address the House this afternoon, but it has been a painful thing for me to listen to this debate today. I'm a freshman in this body, and my understanding was when I showed up here that we would work here and that the Senate would work there, and we wouldn't always come up with the same answers, and that we would also get to together and sort it out.

To have that process derided today as being a bastardization of politics, instead of what exactly the Founding Fathers want us to do, has me confused.

The gentlelady who spoke right before me, and I'm sorry she left the floor right after she derided Republicans for having left the floor, she's now gone, talked about Republicans wanting to see folks on unemployment have those benefits run out.

Mr. Speaker, it was before you and I got here, but four times in 2010 under Democrat control, unemployment benefits ran out. Now, you always did the right thing. You always sorted it out. But those kinds of things happen. We're going to conference today. We have 10 days to get this right.

We got the Defense authorization bill right in 7 days. And the Senate crafted their so-called compromise in 3 days. Surely, we can do better for the American people; and, Mr. Speaker, that's not a partisan divide. That's America at its best. I welcome my colleagues to join us in that.

□ 1630

OUR BRAVE TROOPS, HOME ON AMERICAN SOIL

(Mr. CARNAHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, last week, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta declared an end to the war in Iraq, fulfilling President Obama's pledge to bring the war to a responsible close. This marks an important milestone for the U.S., and it symbolizes our redefined relationship with a sovereign Iraq.

Thanks to the resilience and bravery of our soldiers and civilian personnel, all U.S. combat troops in Iraq will be home by the end of the year. I want to congratulate them on being able to share their holiday seasons together again.

We also honor the memory of lost heroes, and we renew our commitment to

ensure that our new generation of veterans receives the services and care we promised and the veterans earned.

At a time when families are struggling to make ends meet, our commitments to help veterans is more important than ever to ensure they successfully transition their talents here at home for the good of our economy and our country.

On behalf of the Missouri citizens I represent, I wish our brave troops and all their loved ones a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Happy New Year home on American soil.

AN INSULT TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I want to follow my friend from Missouri and add my appreciation to the troops who have come home and to their families, and I thank my colleagues for joining in wearing a yellow ribbon in honor of them. I hope they will go home and do the same and will encourage their communities to do so.

But I am standing here to confront the hypocrisy and the joke of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle in suggesting that the conferees are meeting when they full well know that no conferees are meeting, because no one has been appointed except the one-sided conferees.

Frankly, they want us to be Americans first, not Tea Partiers, not lovers of the special interests. The other body put forward a very thoughtful initiative to keep us going so that the lights will not be turned off in some poor mother's home and so that some senior citizen can still go to his doctor. They wanted to make sure 2.3 million and 134,000 people in Texas would have their unemployment. I'm saddened by this crisis. I'm here to work. I'm going home for an emergency, and I'll be back.

The lady who went off the floor should not have been confronted that way. She spoke. She's ready to work. What about the empty chairs on the other side? They are not ready to work. It's all about a joke. This is an insult to the American people.

NO TAX CUTS UNDER THE CHRISTMAS TREE

(Ms. EDWARDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDWARDS. I didn't think I'd have to take to the floor again; but now that the House Republicans have walked away from the American people, it bears notice.

There are 160 million American people across this country who are going to see their taxes go up come January 1. There are 2.3 million Americans, including 46,000 of them in my home

State of Maryland, who will not get an unemployment check. There are 48 million Americans, mostly our seniors, who are going to see their benefits essentially ripped out from under them in Medicare as their doctors won't be able to treat them because their doctors are getting a cut.

I'm not really sure which Christmas House Republicans are celebrating, but in my house it's a Christmas of charity and of goodness. I am so saddened that here in this House we have ripped out from under the Christmas tree the Christmas for millions of American families who will not get to go into the New Year with a tax cut and who will go into the New Year without an unemployment check. The House Republicans have done a great disservice to this country.

DEMOCRATS, APPOINT YOUR CONFEREES

(Mr. CONAWAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, we've had an awful lot of conversation this afternoon. It twists on the idea that somehow the 100 Members of the Senate are so much smarter and so much brighter and so much more intelligent than the 435 Members of the House of Representatives.

Our colleagues from the other side of the aisle would ask us to simply accede to whatever the Senate does as ludicrous as it is. A 2-month extension is nonsense. It has no commonsense value whatsoever. Everyone in this Chamber knows that. Yet speaker after speaker says that we need to just accede to the wisdom of the Senate. The wisdom of the Senate is represented by a 2-month extension that is not paid for by anything that makes the remotest amount of sense.

We can fix this this coming week, and we think we should. Have them appoint their conferees, Mr. Speaker, so we can fix this for the American people. Then all this doom and gloom that's being spouted out down here goes away with a 1-year extension of unemployment, with a 1-year extension of the payroll tax, and with a 2-year extension for our doctors.

A SHELL GAME ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. We've witnessed a shell game played here on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Republicans talked about having voted for an extension of the unemployment compensation and for extending the payroll tax, but what they gave with the right hand they took from the left. They said, We give you this, but we cut your benefits to 59 weeks of your unemployment compensation.

They all voted against the Affordable Care Act. So in this bill as well, if you have a preexisting condition, they want you not to get health care as you can today. If you're 26 years of age or younger, it would be that you can't get on your parents' insurance policies, which you can today because of the ACA. Also, the doughnut hole would be closed, which it is because of the ACA, but they're against that because they wanted to cut funds to put the America Cares Act into operation.

The fact is that Senate Republicans and Democrats didn't vote for a 60-day extension. They voted for time to get together and do a 1-year extension. That's what we need. They had wiser heads. You saw a good reason not to have term limits. First-year Members are acting as if they know everything; and in a petulant way, they have jeopardized millions of Americans.

THE BOTTOM LINE

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Well done, my good and faithful servants.

That must be what the Koch brothers and the corporate Tea Party backers are saying. Their Republican Party in the House has for the whole year been able to stave off any fairness by protecting their millionaires and billionaires from being denied tax breaks.

Here we are at the end of the session, and they leave having not allowed this body to vote on the bipartisan agreement that the Senate reached with the House leadership's consent—an agreement that passed 89–10—and they went home. So we won't get a chance to vote on that package. They refused to let us do so. That's the story that we end with.

That's the bottom line, and that's the way it is.

A SAD AND WORRISOME TIME MADE WORSE BY THIS DAY

(Ms. SCHAKOWSKY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. At just about this hour, the Sun is setting, and Jewish families around the country, including mine, are going to their Hanukkah Menorah—the festival of lights, the festival of a miracle that the lights lasted for 8 days. Usually, this is a joyful time—a beautiful, holy celebration. For many families around this country, this is a very sad and worrisome time, made worse by this day.

With millions of Americans unemployed and relying on a meager average \$286-a-week check while they look for work, Republicans voted today to not extend unemployment insurance, to not extend a tax cut for middle-income people who need it so badly this year when the economics were so hard. It just breaks my heart that at this holi-

day season and when people are feeling in such a fragile economic state that today's vote took place. It didn't need to. We would have helped the American people today.

Happy Hanukkah.

REPUBLICANS, HAVE A HEART

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. I want to follow up on what my colleague from Illinois said, because it really is true.

We are talking about hurt for America's families here. I know that, in the next week, as this time expires on the unemployment compensation, on the Medicare reimbursement, on the payroll tax cut, I'm going to get calls from seniors telling me that the doctors are not accepting them for Medicare anymore. I'm going to find out that people have lost their unemployment insurance.

Here we are at a time when we're just starting to see the economy improve a little bit; and I know there is a real risk, if we don't extend that payroll tax cut, that we will send the economy back into a recession again.

It is amazing to me to see my colleagues on the other side suggest that somehow they're going to stay here and that the conferees are going to be here. None of that is true. They're home. They're not here. They're going home, and they're not going to come back until after January. I really think it's outrageous to think that they're running the risk that the economy will be hurt by this and that people won't have money in their pockets and that those who receive Medicare may be refused a doctor.

We're simply asking, as Democrats, to have a heart. Why is it that Republicans don't understand the negative consequences of this?

□ 1640

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE DAY

(Mr. ALTMIRE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, the two key takeaways from the debate today are, number one, there is nobody in this Chamber—nobody, Republican, Democrat—nobody in the Senate on the other side—Republican, Democrat, Independent—nobody believes that a 2-month fix is the end result of this process. The 2-month fix is to allow the benefits to continue so that the 160 million Americans that are now benefiting from the reduction in the payroll tax continue to have those benefits while we come together and while we compromise, while we come to a long-term agreement. That's what this is all about.

The other takeaway is the majority party did not allow a vote on the Senate plan. For all the talk about how